

Professional Doctorate Regulations: Doctor of Psychology (PsychD)

Introduction

1. Preamble

- 1.1 These regulations apply to the taught component at levels 7 and 8 in Stage 1. The research component in Stage 2 will fall under the research degree regulations of the University.
- 1.2 The aims and learning outcomes of the programme as approved by the University are set out in the programme handbook and in the programme specification.

2. Definitions of the terms are as follows

2.1 Programme

The modules comprising the taught component together with the research component lead to the award of the PsychD in Counselling Psychology. Students who achieve this award are eligible to apply for registration as a counselling psychologist with the Health and Care Professions Council and as a chartered psychologist with the British Psychological Society.

2.2 Programme Convener

The Programme Convener is responsible for the day-to-day management, administration, organisation and development and teaching effectiveness of the programme and for University quality assurance procedures for the taught and research components. The Programme Convener is supported in these duties by the Head of Doctoral Training.

2.3 Programme Board

A Programme Board oversees the curriculum, quality and standards of the programme, in line with the responsibilities set out in the taught degree regulations. Its membership shall include the Programme Convener, Head of Department or nominee, Module Conveners, and all staff undertaking significant teaching and/or supervising on the programme, and shall

include at least two student representatives and the Subject Librarian. The Chair shall be appointed by the Head of Department.

2.4 **Programme Examinations Board**

A Programme Examinations Board oversees the assessment of the taught component of the course, in line with the responsibilities set out in the taught degree regulations. Its membership shall include the Programme Convener, Module Conveners and staff undertaking significant assessment duties on the modules being reviewed, and shall include the appointed external examiner(s). The Chair shall be appointed by the Head of Department.

2.5 **Research Student Review Board**

The Research Student Review Board has delegated authority from the Research Degrees Committee and is responsible for managing postgraduate research degrees at departmental level once they have progressed to the research element of the programme, and has some delegated powers related to assessment for Stage 2 only.

3. **Structure**

- 3.1 The PsychD is a credit-rated award with a volume of 540 credits. This consists of 120 credits at Level 7 and 60 credits at Level 8 taken in Stage 1 of the programme and a further 360 credits at Level 8 taken in Stage 2 of the programme. Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the programme correspond broadly with the distinction made in research degrees between a 'taught component' and a 'research component'. However, as an accredited professional training programme, the PsychD has taught elements that continue throughout both Stages 1 and 2. The final learning outcomes of the PsychD award shall be at Doctoral level and consistent with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, as well as standards set by the Health and Care Professions Council and British Psychological Society.

3.2 The programme can be completed in full or part-time modes. Students can also elect to change between full and part time modes of attendance at the start of an academic year.

3.3 Students will normally be required to attend a minimum of 80% of all scheduled classes in order to pass each programme module.

4. Period of Registration

4.1 Stage 1

The normal period of registration for Stage 1 is 12 months in full-time mode and 24 months in part-time mode. The maximum period of registration for Stage 1 as a whole is 24 months.

4.2 Stage 2

The normal period of registration for Stage 2 is 24 months in full-time mode and 48 months in part-time mode. The maximum period of registration for Stage 2 as a whole is 48 months.

4.3 Maximum registration periods do not include any periods of interruption or suspension. A further 9 months completion time can be requested by those who have successfully progressed through the RDCom3 upgrade milestone.

5. Assessment

5.1 The Programme Examinations Board shall confirm the marks for modules during Stage 1 of the programme.

5.2 The programme team shall nominate external examiner(s) as required for the modules of Stage 1 of the programme. The examiner(s) shall be different from those appointed by Research Degrees Board to assess the final doctoral portfolio, as outlined in section 13.

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS

6. Application and Registration

- 6.1 All candidates entering the programme must possess a first degree or conversion course in Psychology recognised by the British Psychological Society as conferring the Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (GBC) with the BPS, and of a standard which indicates their suitability for work at Doctoral level, normally a good upper second or first class Honours degree. Candidates must also have relevant and appropriate professional experience of working in an emotionally demanding helper role that involves the use of counselling skills. This can be in a paid or voluntary capacity. Experience should involve working over a continuous period of at least 6-12 months prior to the point at which the application is made in a role providing face to face therapeutic help. Candidates must have completed at least a basic training in counselling skills before commencing the programme. Where substantial relevant work experience or in-house training has been completed this may be considered adequate. All applicants must satisfy the University's English language requirements for research programmes of study which are consistent with Health and Care Professions Council standards.
- 6.2 Given the professional requirements of the programme, all shortlisted applicants will be interviewed as part of the admissions process to adequately establish personal suitability for the programme. Candidates are required to attend interviews in person. It is not possible to conduct interviews by telephone or video conferencing methods.
- 6.3 All students must hold 'in training' membership of the BPS Division of Counselling Psychology. Students are required to provide proof of their registration and membership within three months of commencing the programme, and must maintain these throughout their training.

7. Mode and Terms of Study.

- 7.1 Students may study on a full-time or part-time basis. The minimum and maximum registrations periods for full and part-time study for the taught and research components are set out in section 4 above.
- 7.2 Students must complete the various stages of the PsychD within their respective periods of registration. Time limits do not include any periods of interruption or suspension.
- 7.3 Applications for interruption will be governed by the taught degree regulations for students in Stage 1 of the programme and the research degree regulations for students in Stage 2.

8. Credit Accumulation and Transfer

- 8.1 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) will be considered for applicants who have completed prior study equivalent to specific components of Year 1 of the PsychD programme. Equivalence in module level, content and assessment will be scrutinised in each case on the basis of submitted course material. Applications from candidates who wish to be considered for RPL will be assessed through the programme's usual selection procedures before RPL is considered. RPL will not be granted for personal therapy and practice hours undertaken before the start of the training. This means that it is not possible to gain RPL for all Year 1 components of the PsychD or direct Year 2 entry to the programme.

9. Programme Management

- 9.1 The PsychD programme will be managed by the Programme Convener and Programme Board, with support from the Head of Doctoral Training. This will be done in accordance with the regulations for taught programmes in Stage 1 and the research degree regulations in Stage 2. Programme management in Stage 2 will adhere to principles set out in the research degrees regulations, as agreed by the Research Degrees Committee, including approved delegation to the departmental Research Student Review Board.

10. Assessment regulations

- 10.1 The membership of the Programme Examinations Board shall be as set out in the regulations for taught programmes.
- 10.2 The Programme Examinations Board shall meet as required, but at least once per year. At its meetings, the Programme Examinations Board will fulfil the duties outlined in the regulations for taught programmes and in addition:
- i. approve the results of all Stage 1 module assessments, determining in respect of each candidate percentage marks for level 7 modules and 'Pass/Fail' outcomes for level 8 modules;
 - ii. be responsible for the academic standards of the Stage 1 modules;
 - iii. in the case of failure, agree reassessment requirements and dates.
- 10.3 A student whose academic performance has been, or is likely to be, impaired because of ill health or other reasons, must inform the Department of Psychology office in writing at the earliest opportunity, and provide supporting documentary evidence. In the case of ill health this should be a medical certificate.
- 10.4 Applications for interruptions or extensions will be dealt with under the provisions of the taught degree regulations for students in Stage 1 of the programme and under the research degree regulations for students in Stage 2. Applications for smaller periods of extensions or interruptions for students in Stage 2 with involve consultation with the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee.
- 10.5 All module assessment shall be on a percentage basis for level 7 modules and on a 'Pass'/'Fail' basis for level 8 modules.
- 10.6 The passing mark at Level 7 is 50%. Condonation of marks is not permitted.

- 10.7 In cases where a candidate has failed, extended or deferred a particular assessment, the Programme Examinations Board shall stipulate the nature and timing of the reassessment and/or attendance required to pass.

11. Progression

- 11.1 In Stage 1, a candidate who has failed the module assessment overall on the first attempt will normally be permitted one opportunity to resit the failed components of the module assessment, without further study, subject to availability. In cases where it is not practical for a student to resit a component of assessment without further study, the Programme Examinations Board has discretion to require a student to retake the module. The Programme Examinations Board may exercise discretion and grant a second resit opportunity where appropriate in the context of the student's overall academic progress, or under the provisions of the Mitigating Circumstances Policy. A student who has been granted a resit must submit all outstanding work at the next scheduled opportunity as specified by the Programme Examinations Board.
- 11.2 In Stage 1 students will normally be permitted one automatic resubmission of any failed assignments. If a mark awarded falls below 35% or if a student fails assignments in more than one module, resubmission will be at the discretion of the Programme Examinations Board. Marks awarded to passing resubmitted assignments will be capped at the pass mark of 50%. Marks for resits due to approved mitigating circumstances will not be capped. Where a student has a combination of both fails and deferrals on components within a single module, the resit penalty will apply to those components for which a fail was previously recorded.
- 11.3 Progression from Stage 1 of the programme to Stage 2 requires students to pass all of the Level 7 modules; achieve a minimum average mark of 60% on graded modules; and to pass the Research in Counselling Psychology module at level 8. Failing assignments may therefore affect progression from Stage 1 to Stage 2, because of the requirement to achieve an average of 60% on graded modules. The Programme Examinations Board may

exercise discretion if a student is precluded from achieving the 60% criterion due only to the capping of one resubmission mark. If a student fails a resubmission attempt on a module this normally results in termination of studies.

11.4 If a Stage 1 student has a valid late or re-assessment(s) pending at the last Programme Examinations Board of the academic year in September, the Board will exercise discretion to determine whether or not the student should be permitted to conditionally progress to Stage 2 of the programme. This will be based on an assessment of the student's performance on the programme to date, and whether there is evidence to assume progression criteria will be achieved upon completion of the outstanding assessments. Specifically, conditional progression will normally only be considered if a student meets the following criteria as applicable:

- i. Assessed work the student has already passed indicates it is technically still possible for them to achieve the Stage 2 progression criteria (e.g. in terms of the required 60% average)
- ii. They have not failed more than one item of assessment
- iii. If they do not pass the 60-credit *Research in Counselling Psychology* module at the first attempt, the standard achieved in the first attempt indicates a likelihood of achieving the required standard at the second attempt; this will normally be indicated by an indicative mark of not less than 40% at the first attempt, where 50% indicates a passing mark.
- iv. If a student fails to accrue all of the placement, supervision and/or personal therapy hours required to pass the 60-credit *Professional Practice and Development* module in time for the Programme Examinations board, it looks likely that these can be completed within a further month.

If a student meets criteria 1 and 2 above but not 3 and 4, the Programme Examinations Board may recommend a programme suspension rather than conditional progression, giving the student the following academic year in which to attempt re-submission as a Stage 1 student before determining whether they can progress to Stage 2.

If a student who has been permitted to conditionally progress to Stage 2 subsequently fails to achieve the necessary progression criteria following assessment of pending assessments, they will be programme terminated and offered a PGDip or MSc exit award, if commensurate with the credits they have accrued in total.

- 11.5 A student who has been permitted to progress conditionally into Stage 2 will be still required to formally register and pay tuition fees commensurate with their period of registration for that academic year.
- 11.6 Once assessment outcomes and achievement of the criteria to progress to Stage 2 have been confirmed by the Programme Examinations Board, the student progresses to the doctoral research component of the programme, and the Research Student Review Board shall be responsible for confirming the project (RDCom2), as governed by research degree regulations.
- 11.7 **Supervision of the empirical research project:** On the recommendation of the Head of Department, the Research Degrees Committee shall appoint at least two supervisors for each candidate, a Director of Studies and one or more Co-supervisors. To qualify as a Director of Studies, a supervisor must have experience of supervising at least one PhD or one professional doctorate candidate from registration to successful completion. Both the Director of Studies and Co-supervisor(s) must normally have subject expertise appropriate for supervision at doctoral level and have received relevant supervisor training. The Research Degrees Committee may appoint a replacement or additional supervisor at any time if it deems this to be necessary, and shall do so if no supervisor continues to be a member of the staff of the University.
- 11.8 Once a student has entered the research phase they will be required to undergo Annual Progress Monitoring as outlined in the research degree regulations.
- 11.9 Students will be required to undergo an RDCom3 upgrade process towards the end of Year 2 (Year 2b for part-time students) to evaluate whether they are progressing satisfactorily towards completion of various

programme requirements and components of their doctoral portfolio. Students will be required to submit the following for evaluation:

- Completed RDCom3 form
- Written work (approx. 10,000 words), including
 - Year 2 case study
 - Work/chapter from empirical research project
- Account of empirical project work undertaken and future plan
- In-class research presentation
- Practice and Development Log

Each student's submission will be reviewed by an RDCom3 upgrade board, comprised of research supervisors, clinical tutors and Departmental Research Student Review Board (RSRB) representatives.

In order to be recommended for upgrade the submission will normally need to include evidence of the following:

Practice

- 120 hours of an appropriate range of placement practice (+/- 10%), including 70 hours of psychodynamic practice (+/- 10%)
- 15 hours of placement supervision (+/- 10%)
- Satisfactory placement supervisor evaluations
- Satisfactory professional practice log documentation
- Satisfactory attendance
- Satisfactory Year 2 case study

Research

- Satisfactory progress and draft work from empirical project
- Account of empirical project work undertaken and future plan
- In-class project presentation

Personal development

- 26 hours of personal therapy (or 52 for part-time students) (+/- 10%)
- Satisfactory attendance at the Year 2 experiential group

If a student has not met any of these markers by the RDCom3 submission point this will normally result in a requirement to resubmit an RDCom3 reapplication within 3 months to evidence satisfactory progress, before upgrade and progression to Year 3 is approved. If a student does not achieve upgrade after two attempts, they will normally not be permitted to progress further on the PsychD and be granted an exit award of MSc in Counselling Psychology.

- 11.9 At any point in the training, circumstances may arise in which the programme team may decide, after an appropriate process of consultation, that a student should terminate or withdraw from the programme. This will be necessary if, for example, there is evidence that the student disregards principles of ethical practice, they are unfit to practise, or are failing to meet the academic requirements of the programme. A student's fitness to practise may be challenged if their behaviour or professional conduct causes concern or raises questions about their suitability to continue on the programme of study. The University's [Fitness to Practice policy](#) outlines the procedures which will be taken if a student does not comply with either the University's Code of Conduct or their respective professional regulatory body Code of Conduct (e.g. HCPC and BPS). Termination of registration may also be necessary during Stage 2 of the programme if, in the absence of a satisfactory and documented reason, a student's attendance, academic progress or productivity is unsatisfactory. In such cases, the University's Cause for Concern Procedure as outlined in the general Research Degree regulations will be followed.

12. Exit Awards

- 12.1 At the end of Stage 1 of the programme, students who do not meet the criteria required to progress to Stage 2 may be eligible for one of two exit awards. Students who successfully complete 120 credits at Level 7 but do

not pass the Research in counselling psychology module, either at Level 7 or Level 8, may be eligible for an exit award of a Postgraduate Diploma in Counselling Psychology. Students who successfully complete 180 credits at Level 7, including passing the Research in Counselling Psychology module at Level 7 or 8, may be eligible for an exit award of a Master of Science in Counselling Psychology.

A student who, after progressing to the Research component, does not successfully complete the RDCom3 progress evaluation milestone will not be able to continue further on the PsychD programme, but will be eligible for the MSc in Counselling Psychology exit award.

A student who, after completing their viva, does not meet the requirements for the award of a doctoral degree, may be offered an MPhil in Counselling Psychology exit award. A student who does not meet the requirements for the award of an MPhil, will be eligible for an MSc exit award.

These exit awards do not confer eligibility to apply for registration with the HCPC or chartered status with the BPS.

13. Assessment of the final doctoral portfolio

13.1 At the end of Stage 2, students will be assessed through the submission of a Doctoral Portfolio (45 - 55,000 words), which comprises evidence of their learning across professional practice and research domains. The portfolio includes the following components and indicative word lengths:

- **An introductory overview** (1 - 2,000 words), which outlines the portfolio's structure content, themes and an underpinning narrative for the various components.
- **An empirical research project** (24 - 26,000 words), which comprises a literature review, methodology, analysis, discussion; and/or publication-ready papers.
- **Two clinical case studies** (5 - 6,000 words each), which evidence the students' clinical competence and practice-based enquiry at doctoral level.

- A **reflexive integration essay** (5 - 6,000 words) in which the student reflects on the development and integration of their professional learning, practice, philosophy and identity over the course of the programme, across practice and research domains.
 - A **learning and development record** (4 - 9,000 words) which includes annual reflective learning statements, practice supervisor evaluations, placement experience record and annual progress reviews.
- 13.2 The doctoral portfolio will be assessed through a viva voce examination, in accordance with the University's research degrees regulations. The portfolio will be examined against broad assessment criteria and a recommendation made against a set of possible outcomes following assessment, as outlined in Annex A below.
- 13.3 The appointment of viva examiners will adhere to the usual principles and procedures outlined in the research degree regulations. Examining teams must between them possess the necessary expertise and experience to adequately assess a student's doctoral portfolio across practice and research domains. This means that examiners may possess expertise in one or other of these domains but not both, but still be eligible to act as an examiner. Appropriate consideration of this will be given when assessing proposed viva examiner arrangements via examination entry forms. For example, it may not be necessary for one of the examiners to possess the professional practice expertise needed to assess the practice-related components of the portfolio provided they have expertise in the broad area of the student's empirical research project, or vice versa.
- 13.4 Although every effort will be made to anonymise the service users written about in the portfolio's case studies and reflexive integration essay they will still be potentially identifiable from the information provided. Hence, in order to ensure service user confidentiality and anonymity is adequately protected, an abridged final version of doctoral portfolio will be submitted to and held by the University, and accessible in the public domain. This will consist only of the empirical research project element.

14. Criteria for the award of a professional doctorate and outcomes of the final examination

14.1 In order for a student to qualify for the doctoral award, the examiners must be satisfied that the student's final submission and performance in the oral examination, when considered together:

- i. comprise an integrated and coherent body of professionally or creatively engaged scholarly work of a quality to satisfy peer review and merit publication, strategic implementation, performance, screening or display (as appropriate) in complete or abridged form;
- ii. present a systematic and critical assessment of current praxis and research from the forefront of the professional or creative context and its cognate disciplines;
- iii. make a distinct and original contribution to an area of practice through the creation, interpretation, application or implementation of new knowledge, insights or approaches;
- iv. demonstrate a detailed understanding of techniques for research and advanced enquiry relevant to a professional context;
- v. represent in terms of its scope what might reasonably be achieved within the time frame of Stage 2 of the course.

14.2 Except for the provisions of (c) below, the examiners shall submit to the Research Degrees Board a joint report on the outcome of the final examination containing one of the following recommendations:

- i. The degree of Doctor of Psychology should be awarded.
- ii. The degree of Doctor of Psychology should be awarded subject to corrections being made to the submission within three months. The corrections shall be of a level which does not require re-assessment, but one or more of the examiners shall be asked to verify that the corrections have been made before the degree is awarded.
- iii. The degree of Doctor of Psychology should not be awarded, but the student may resubmit work for assessment within 18 months, with or without a further oral examination. The student will be required to re-enrol with the University during that time and will be entitled to

supervision in accordance with University guidelines. The resubmission will be examined where possible by the same examiners who assessed the first submission. A student shall be given only one opportunity to resubmit.

- iv. The degree of Doctor of Psychology should not be awarded, but the degree of Master of Philosophy should be awarded, possibly subject to corrections being made to the submission within three months. The corrections shall be of a level which does not require re-assessment, but one or more of the examiners shall be asked to verify that the corrections have been made before the degree is awarded.
- v. The student should fail the examination without an opportunity to resubmit, but the degree Masters of Science should be awarded.

14.3 If the examiners are unable to reach agreement on the outcome, they shall each submit separate reports to the Research Degrees Board. The Research Degrees Committee will appoint an additional external examiner and consider each of the examiners' reports before reaching a decision on the final outcome of the examination.

15. Copyright and Access to the Research Project

15.1 Copyright and Access related to research projects is subject to the University's policy.

16. Appeal Regulations

16.1 Students have the right to appeal against the decision of the Programme Examinations Board or the Research Degrees Committee.

16.2 For appeals against decisions made by the Programme Examinations Board, the appeals procedure for taught programmes will be applied. For appeals against the decisions of the Research Degrees Committee students should follow the research degrees academic appeals procedure.